

# The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



January 2026 ✦ Volume 50, Issue 1

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## The Fables of Aesop as a Preparation for the Gospel

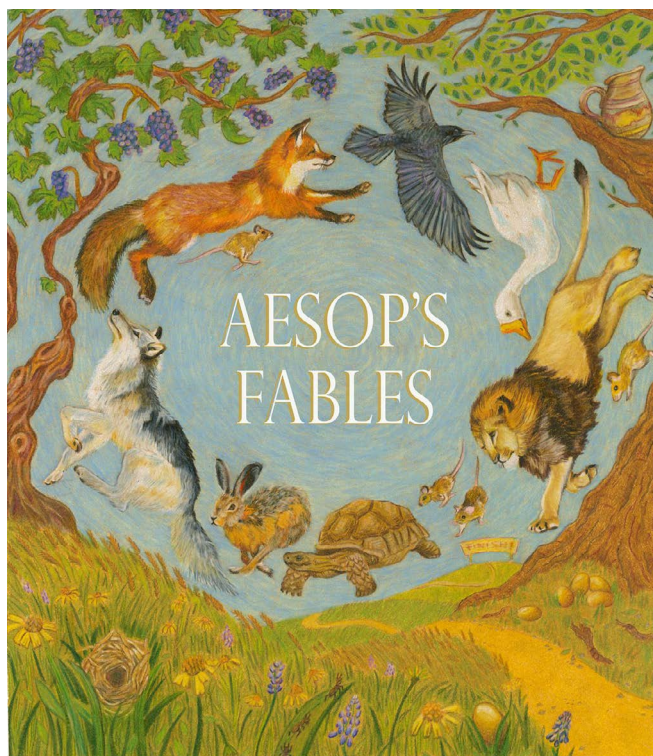
From antiquity to the present day, humanity has sought ways to express truth, to teach virtue, and to demonstrate the consequences of human behavior. Two great pedagogical currents of history - seemingly different yet essentially convergent - are the fables of Aesop and the teaching of Christ, as interpreted and lived within the Orthodox Tradition.

The human journey toward truth has never been instantaneous; it has been gradual, pedagogical, and revelatory. Even before the word of the Gospel was heard, humanity had already received seeds of truth through conscience, experience, and observation of the world.

Within this process belong the fables of Aesop, which, although lacking a revelatory character, vividly depict the natural moral order. With the

coming of Jesus Christ, this moral knowledge is not abolished but transcended and brought to its fullness. The Fathers of the Church, with discernment and wisdom, recognized in these fables a preparation for the Gospel - a vestibule that prepares humanity for the truth of salvation.

*Continued on page 2* ⇨



### Holy Trinity welcomes His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos

On Sunday, December 28, the Sunday After Christmas, the parish of Holy Trinity welcomed His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos. The visit of His Eminence completed the Christmas celebration with our spiritual father coming as a gift to celebrate the Divine Liturgy with Fr. Peter and Fr. John. It was a joy-filled day as His Eminence spoke to us about keeping Christ within our hearts all season long and into the New Year. ❖

*More Photos on page 4* ⇨



# Dates in the Life of Our Church

January – February 2026

## JANUARY

<b>I</b>	New Year's Day – Office Closed	<b>I3</b>	4:00 PM Greek School
	Naming of the Lord and St. Basil the Great		4:30 PM Greek School Vasilopita
	8:30 AM Orthros		7:00 PM Philoptochos Board Mtg.
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy		7:30 PM Parish Council
<b>4</b>	Religious Education Classes Resume	<b>I4</b>	9:30 AM TOTs
	Sunday before Theophany	<b>I5</b>	7:00 PM Cultural Committee
	8:15 AM Orthros		Consul General of Greece
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy		4:00 PM Greek School
<b>5</b>	Paramoni of Theophany	<b>I7</b>	St. Anthony the Great
	8:30 AM Orthros		8:30 AM Orthros
	9:00 AM Royal Hours		9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	10:00 AM Vespersal Divine Liturgy and Blessing of Waters		6:00 PM Parish Family Dance
<b>6</b>	Holy Theophany – Office Closed	<b>I8</b>	8:15 AM Orthros
	Holy Theophany		9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	8:30 AM Orthros	<b>20</b>	7:30 PM NNJYC
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy with Great Blessing of Waters		4:00 PM Greek School
	11:00 AM Trinity Circle	<b>22</b>	4:00 PM Greek School
<b>7</b>	St. John the Baptist	<b>25</b>	8:15 AM Orthros
	8:30 AM Orthros		9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy		11:45 AM Vasilopita Luncheon
<b>8</b>	4:00 PM Greek School	<b>27</b>	4:00 PM Greek School
	4:30 PM Greek School Vasilopita	<b>28</b>	9:30 AM TOTs
<b>II</b>	Sunday after Theophany	<b>29</b>	4:00 PM Greek School
	8:15 AM Orthros	<b>30</b>	Three Hierarchs
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy		8:15 AM Orthros
			9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

## FEBRUARY

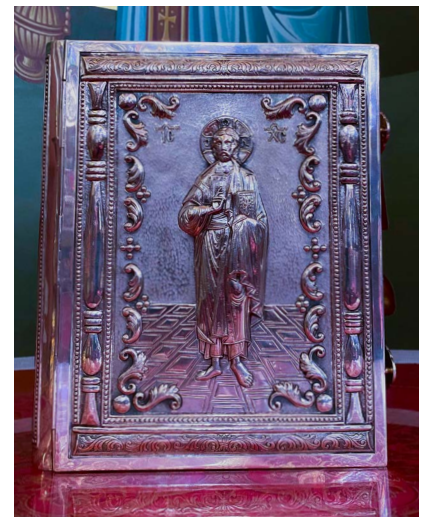
<b>I</b>	8:15 AM Orthros	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	11:45 AM Godparent Communion Breakfast	
<b>2</b>	Presentation of the Lord	<b>IO</b>	4:00 PM Greek School
	8:30 AM Orthros		7:00 PM Philoptochos Board Mtg.
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy		7:30 PM Parish Council
<b>3</b>	11:00 AM Trinity Circle	<b>II</b>	9:30 AM TOTs
	4:00 PM Greek School	<b>I2</b>	4:00 PM Greek School
<b>5</b>	4:00 PM Greek School	<b>I4</b>	Saturday of Souls
<b>8</b>	St. Theodore the General		9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
	8:15 AM Orthros		

## The Fables of Aesop

↔ *Continued from page 1*

The educational history of humanity neither begins nor ends with Christianity, yet in Christianity it finds its fullness and its salvific completion. Before the Gospel, humanity was instructed through experience, philosophy, and myth. One of the most significant bearers of this moral preparation was Aesop, whose fables, in a simple yet penetrating manner, highlighted timeless truths about human nature. Aesop's fables employ simple images of animals and everyday situations to convey profound moral teachings. In a similar manner, Christ spoke to the people through parables such as the Sower, the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan. In each case, truth is not imposed but is revealed to the listener who is prepared to reflect.

Saint John Chrysostom notes the parable brings lofty meanings down to the measure of human weakness, so that teaching may become comprehensible and experiential:



“Through parables He educates, so that they may receive the truth not by compulsion, but by free choice” (Homily XLV on Matthew, PG 57, 464).

The same pedagogical logic is evident in the fables, which function as a mirror of human behavior. When Christ came “in the fullness of time,” He did not abolish natural moral knowledge, but transcended and perfected it, leading it from the level of behavior to the level of salvation and communion with God.

Aesop’s fables function pedagogically by presenting and condensing narratives with symbolic figures that culminate in a clear moral conclusion. They act as a mirror of human behavior, provoking self-knowledge.

Correspondingly, Christ used parables as a means of revealing the Kingdom of God. Saint John Chrysostom, interpreting the parables, emphasizes: “For He does not speak in parables out of obscurity, but out of condescension, so that He may lead us from sensible things to intelligible ones” (Homily XLV on Matthew, PG 57, 464).

The Church recognizes that image and example are indispensable for the transmission of truth, especially in a spiritually immature world. Therefore, Aesop’s fables are examined as a preparation for the Gospel and interpreted in the light of the Fathers of the Orthodox Eastern Church.

### Myth and Parable as Pedagogical Forms of Discourse

Myth, like parable, functions as indirect speech. It does not impose truth but suggests it. Christ’s parabolic teaching fits precisely within this pedagogical framework. Saint John Chrysostom emphasizes that parables do not aim at obscuring the truth, but at condescension to human weakness (Homily XLV on Matthew, PG 57, 464). Human beings are called to recognize themselves within the narrative. The same occurs with Aesop’s fables, which render the listener both judge and, simultaneously, accused of their own behavior.

## Examples of Fables and Theological Correspondences

### The Hare and the Tortoise – Patience and Humility

This familiar fable highlights the superiority of steady progress over arrogant self-confidence and demonstrates the destructive power of arrogance and the salvific potential of perseverance.

The tortoise wins the long and arduous race not because of natural gifts, but because of steadfastness. The same spirit is found in Christ’s words: “Whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” “He who endures to the end will be saved.” - Matthew 24:13

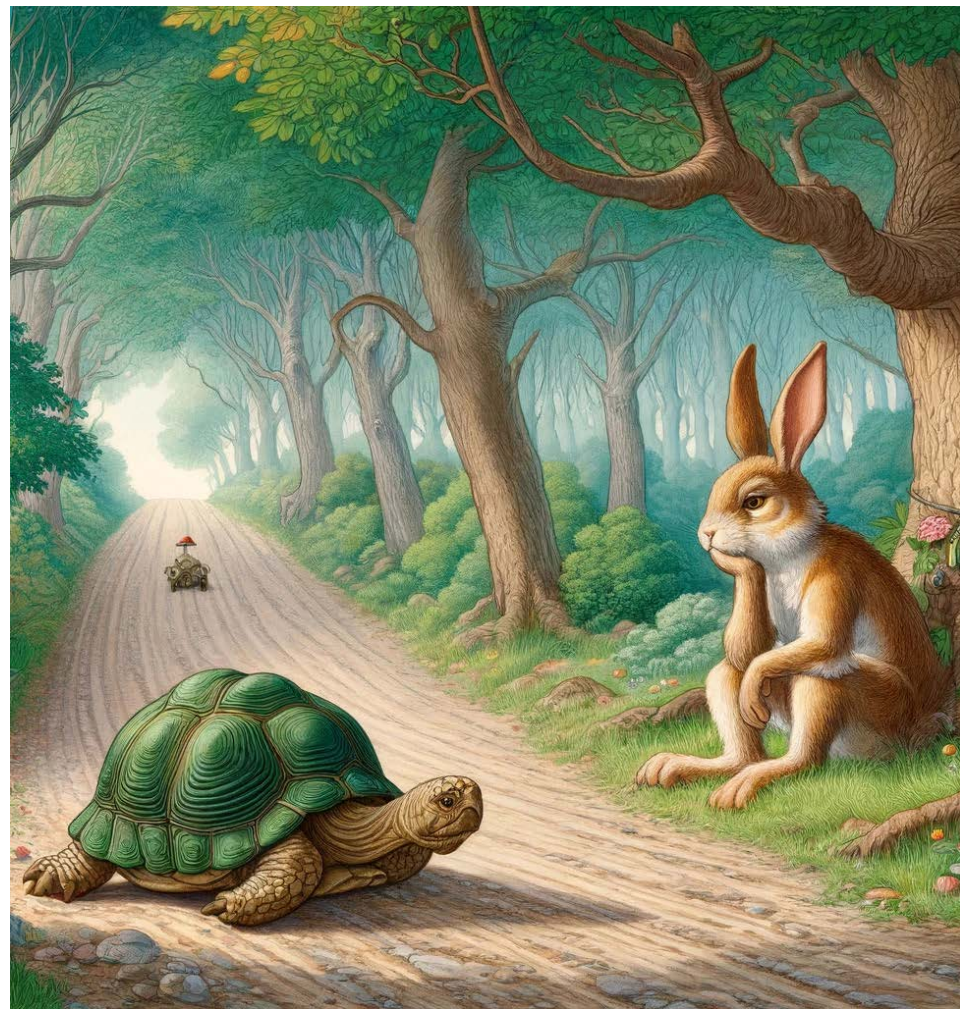
Saint Basil the Great emphasizes that spiritual progress is not the result of speed or spectacular action, but of steady ascetic practice and patience in the struggle for virtue: “The achieve-

ments of virtue are not accomplished in haste, but in time and patience.” (Very Detailed Rules (Ὅροι κατὰ πλάτος), Question 22, PG 31, 1017)

Liturgically, the Church cultivates the same virtue through repetition and the ascetical rhythm of the ecclesiastical year. The Christian life is not a contest of display, but a long journey of ascetic effort. The fable thus functions as a natural foreshadowing of the spiritual path.

Next month we will continue our examination with the following fables: The Wolf and the Lamb (Injustice and Innocence); The Fox and the Grapes (Self-Deception and Spiritual Blindness); The Lion and the Mouse (Mercy and Humility). ❖

*Article written by  
Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden*







# Philoptochos

■ KATHY MAGLARAS, PRESIDENT

The joyful Christmas season reminds us about the beauty of giving and the importance of thanking God for His love, guidance and constant support. Through His blessings, we can serve others and continue fulfilling the mission Philoptochos. Each month, we strive to help those in need while strengthening the bonds of sisterhood and fellowship.

On November 7, 2025, Philoptochos and GOYA joined together for the Grow-A-Row activity, whose mission is to positively impact as many lives

as possible through a volunteer effort of harvesting fresh produce for local pantries. We collected nearly 24,000 pounds (96,000 servings) of beets. This effort supported thousands of families across NJ and beyond who face food insecurity. Thank you to all who volunteered--it was a wonderful day!

On December 4., Philoptochos held their annual Christmas party. A heartfelt thank you to Phyllis Vernes and Marina LoAlbo for once again executing a flawless festive evening. The Bouras Center was beautifully

decorated, filled with our traditional 12 days of Christmas, our holiday vendors, and joyful fellowship as 75 ladies came together to begin the holiday season! Each Christmas we invite the YWCA of Union County as our special guests and this year they announced that our donations were used towards the rebuilding of their facility after a devastated fire. Thank you to all who came to the Christmas party and for supporting the YWCA!

I wish you a wonderful New Year with many blessings. ❖



On Saturday, December 6, 2025, Philoptochos prepared 200 sandwich bags for Elijah's Promise in New Brunswick, NJ. Kristin, our chair, organized this feed the hungry initiative and then delivered the bagged lunches. We extend our sincere thanks to Elise, Debbie K, Ellen C, Yiana, Maria S, Mary and Kathy. Afterwards, Elise and Debbie K continued to beautifully pack for our annual Christmas Bake Sale and for our Friends of Holy Trinity. Thank you!



As we look ahead to the coming months, our focus will be St Basil Academy and uplifting our youth programs before we shift once again to broader outreach efforts. We remain deeply grateful for all of God's blessings, As we reflected on the birth of our Lord, we also reflected on the gifts we have received, and how we many continue to share those gifts with others in the New Year.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

All are welcome and please stop by the fellowship hour for more information.

- January 25th  
Vasilopita Luncheon



# GOYA

GOYA Christ Encounter Retreat / Boston Trip/Hellenic College/Holy Cross

■ BY SOPHIA SKALKOTOS, GOYA PRESIDENT

GOYA wishes a Happy New Year to all! Last year ended with another great showing at the basketball playoffs. The junior team was undefeated for the entire season, and the senior team had four wins with only two losses. While neither team made it to the championship game this year, they played some great basketball and represented Christ and the church through their good sportsmanship.

Christmas traditions continued as GOYA returned to local elder care/nursing homes to sing Christmas carols to the residents and spread holiday cheer. The big turnout was happily received by the residents, whose days were brightened by the visit. That night, the boys and girls enjoyed a Christmas party that included a funny white elephant gift exchange and an ugly sweater contest. Both were a good source of laughter and fun for everyone.

Led by GOYA, frappé sales during December were a success, which will subsidize the dance and choir groups to attend MDF (Metropolis Music & Dance Festival) on President's Day Weekend. GOYA also helped volunteer at the Annual Christmas Program organized by the Religious Education Department and Joy/Hope. Participation in the annual Christmas Eve service was another enriching experience. The year ended with another fun Christmas Dance that was held this year at Ss Nicholas, Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Roseland, NJ.

Looking ahead to the spring, GOYA is excited for another great Sights & Sounds Program that brings together orthodox youth to celebrate their creative interests and talents. ❖



Holy Trinity Cultural Committee  
invites Parishioners and Philhellenes  
to a reception and discussion with the



Consulate General of Greece  
New York  
**Iphigenia Kanara**

Event Date:  
**January 15, 2026**  
at 6:30 PM

Location:  
Bouras Center at Holy Trinity  
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Please RSVP by contacting the office at  
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*The Ladies Philoptochos Society of Holy Trinity*



**VASILOPITA LUNCHEON  
&  
STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY**



**January 25, 2026**

*Immediately following Divine Liturgy in the Bouras Center*

*All proceeds to support St. Basil Academy and youth and young adult programs throughout the Archdiocese and in all Metropolises*

**ADULTS - \$30  
CHILDREN 16 and under - \$20**

Includes Buffet Luncheon, Salad, Mezethes, Wine & Dessert

Please mail or stop by Philoptochos table to sign up

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**RESERVATION FORM**

***Deadline by January 19<sup>th</sup> - Reserved seating for tables of 10***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ # Adults: \_\_\_\_\_ # Children \_\_\_\_\_

Amt Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_

Checks payable to: Ladies Philoptochos Society of HTGOC  
Zelle accepted: [treasurer@htphiloptochos.com](mailto:treasurer@htphiloptochos.com)

Send to: Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church  
250 Gallows Hill Road, Westfield, NJ 07090  
Attn: Vasilopita Luncheon

Mary Carayannopoulos & Yiana Leichtling, Co-Chairs

# Community Communion Sunday

*With breakfast to follow*



## Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

February 8, 2026

*Sponsored by Holy Trinity Religious Education*

All are encouraged to invite their godchildren & godparents and come together in fellowship and faith in receiving Communion as a community and enjoying the breakfast to follow.



Orthros 8:15 AM; Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM  
Breakfast in the Bouras Center after Sunday School classes



Reservations during Fellowship Hour on  
**Jan 18<sup>th</sup>, Jan 25<sup>th</sup> & Feb 1<sup>th</sup>**

This form and payment can also be dropped off or mailed to the church office,  
**ATTN: Communion Breakfast**



**\$14.00 for adults**  
**\$6.00 for children under 12**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of adults: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children (12 & under): \_\_\_\_\_

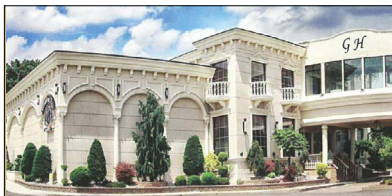
Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Cash · / Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Please volunteer to help Saturday 2/7 and/or Sunday 2/8 by calling the chairperson, Andrea Cerini at (908) 347-3521 or via <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050A4DA5A622A75-61389618-copy>



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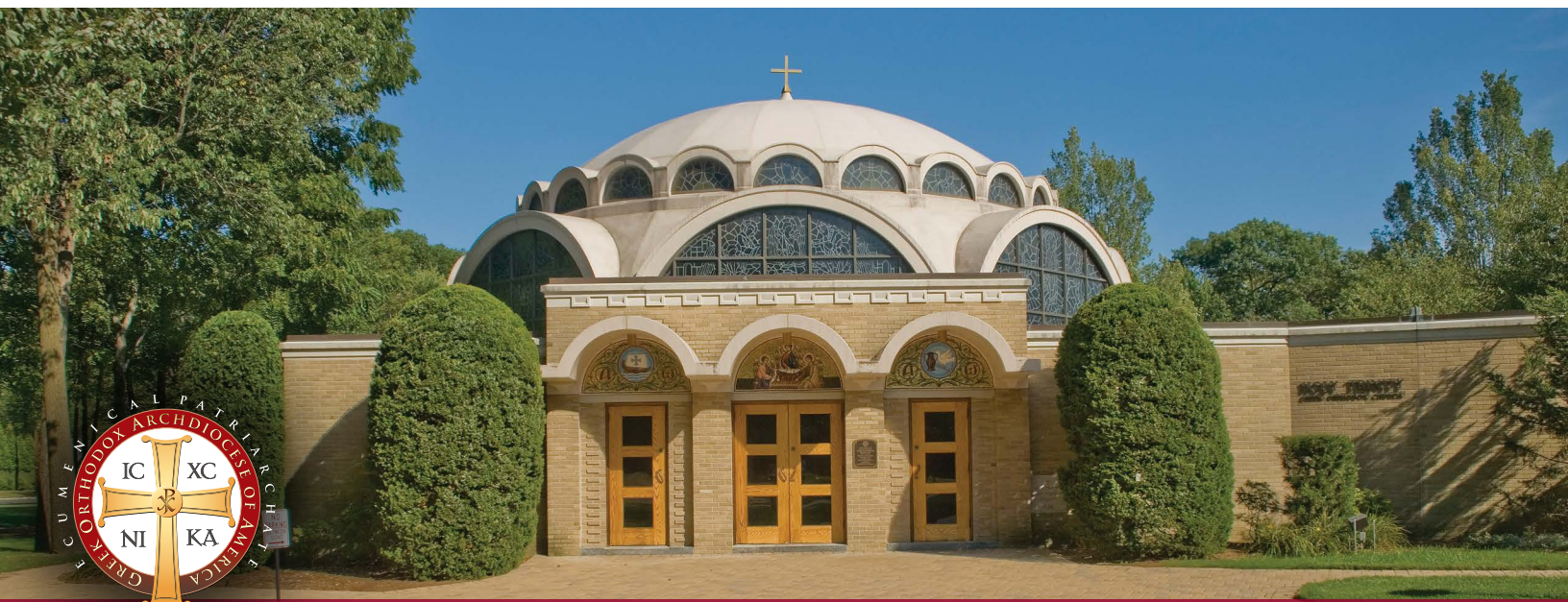
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*Web site* holytrinitywestfield.org  
*Presiding Priest* Rev. Fr. Peter Delviziis  
*E-mail* FrPeter@htgocnj.org

## OFFICE STAFF

*Office Manager* Diana R. Waltsak  
*Admin. Assistant* Kathy Genakos  
*Caretaker* Beatriz Ramirez

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*Choir Director* Anne Kernoski  
*Organist* Phyllis Verenes  
*Head Acolyte* Alex Spiridonov

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*Philoctochos* Kathy Maglaras  
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*Greek School* Stavroula Mergoupis  
*Greek School PTO* Zaharoula Ioannou  
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Peter Tarhanidis  
*Trinity Circle* Avi Kiriakatis  
*Fellowship* Lauren Karanikolas  
*Scouting* Miriam Kotsonis

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

	<i>Sundays</i>	<i>Weekdays</i>
<i>Orthros/Matins</i>	8:15 AM	8:30 AM
<i>Divine Liturgy</i>	9:30 AM	9:30 AM

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